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LETTER DATED 20 JANUARY 1997 FROM THE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I. OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF THE LIBYAN ARAB JAMAHIRIYA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a letter addressed to you by Mr. Omar Mustafa Muntasser, Secretary of the General People's Committee for Foreign Liaison and International Cooperation of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, concerning the balloonist, Mr. Steve Fossett, who overflew Libyan airspace.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Ali Sunni MUNTASSER
Deputy Permanent Representative
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Annex

Letter dated 17 January 1997 from the Secretary of the General People's Committee for Foreign Liaison and International Cooperation of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya addressed to the President of the Security Council

[Original: Arabic]

Mr. Steve Fossett, who is flying around the world in a balloon, has asked to be allowed to pass through Libyan airspace. As you know, the Security Council, responding to pressure from the United States, imposed an aerial embargo on the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. An official spokesman for the United States Department of State has accused the Libyan authorities of paranoia and has reproached them for preventing Mr. Fossett's balloon from passing through Libyan airspace.

It is incomprehensible that an official spokesman for the United States Department of State should censure the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya when all the world knows that his country is behind the aerial embargo on the Jamahiriya.

We should like to inform the Security Council that as long as the United States censures the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya for having prevented the balloon from passing through its airspace because of the aerial embargo imposed on it, we in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya shall, as of this moment, allow Mr. Fossett's passage through Libyan airspace, and we shall approve passage for all aircraft through the Jamahiriya's airspace and the landing of all aircraft at its airports. Libyan Arab Airways will also immediately resume its flights to all of the world's countries.

(Signed) Omar Mustafa MUNTASSER
Secretary of the General People's Committee
for Foreign Liaison and International Cooperation